

B. ROUND ROCK AND ITS TRAILS TODAY

The Demographic Context of Round Rock
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Key Guiding Goals of the Trails Plan
Existing Trails in and near Round Rock Today
Citizen Input Regarding Trails
Trail Opportunities in each Sector of the City

The Demographic Context of Round Rock

Round Rock’s growth over the last three decades has been spectacular, and has transformed the city into one of the most dynamic communities in the state of Texas. Round Rock has grown from a small stagecoach stop along the Chisholm Trail in the 1850’s into one of the fastest growing communities in Texas. In 1970 the population of the city was 2811, and since then the city has more than doubled in size every decade, reaching a projected population of over 78,000 in the year 2004.

Over the next two decades, the growth of the city is expected to slow somewhat, but is still projected to follow double digit increases every decade. The population estimates developed as part of the 2000 General Plan estimated that the city would reach a population of approximately 75,000 by the year 2010, but by 2003 that population had already been reached, and now exceeds 78,000. New projections for both the city of Round Rock and Williamson County around the city are shown on this page, and reflect the basis for significant increased demand for trails in the area.

Projected Population Growth of Round Rock			
Year	Round Rock	Percent Change	Williamson County
2000	61,136	-	249,967
2004 (Estimated)	78,487	28%	n/a
2010	105,900	35%	352,811
2020	145,050	38%	476,833
Ultimate	236,000	63%	n/a

Key Guiding Goals of the Citywide Trails Master Plan

Vision - Create a strong vision for a citywide trails and greenway system that is supported by a majority of the residents of Round Rock.

Develop in Increments - Plan a system that can be developed in increments by both public and private entities, but that ultimately will interconnect into a citywide network.

Understanding and Value of Trails - Increase the level of understanding of the importance and value of trails and greenways, and to encourage the stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

Framework - Provide a framework for coordinated development of trails throughout the city.

Quality of Life - Enhance the quality of life for citizens of Round Rock by providing additional recreational facilities.

Improve Access to Trails - Provide access to trail corridors for all parts of the city and all residents of Round Rock.

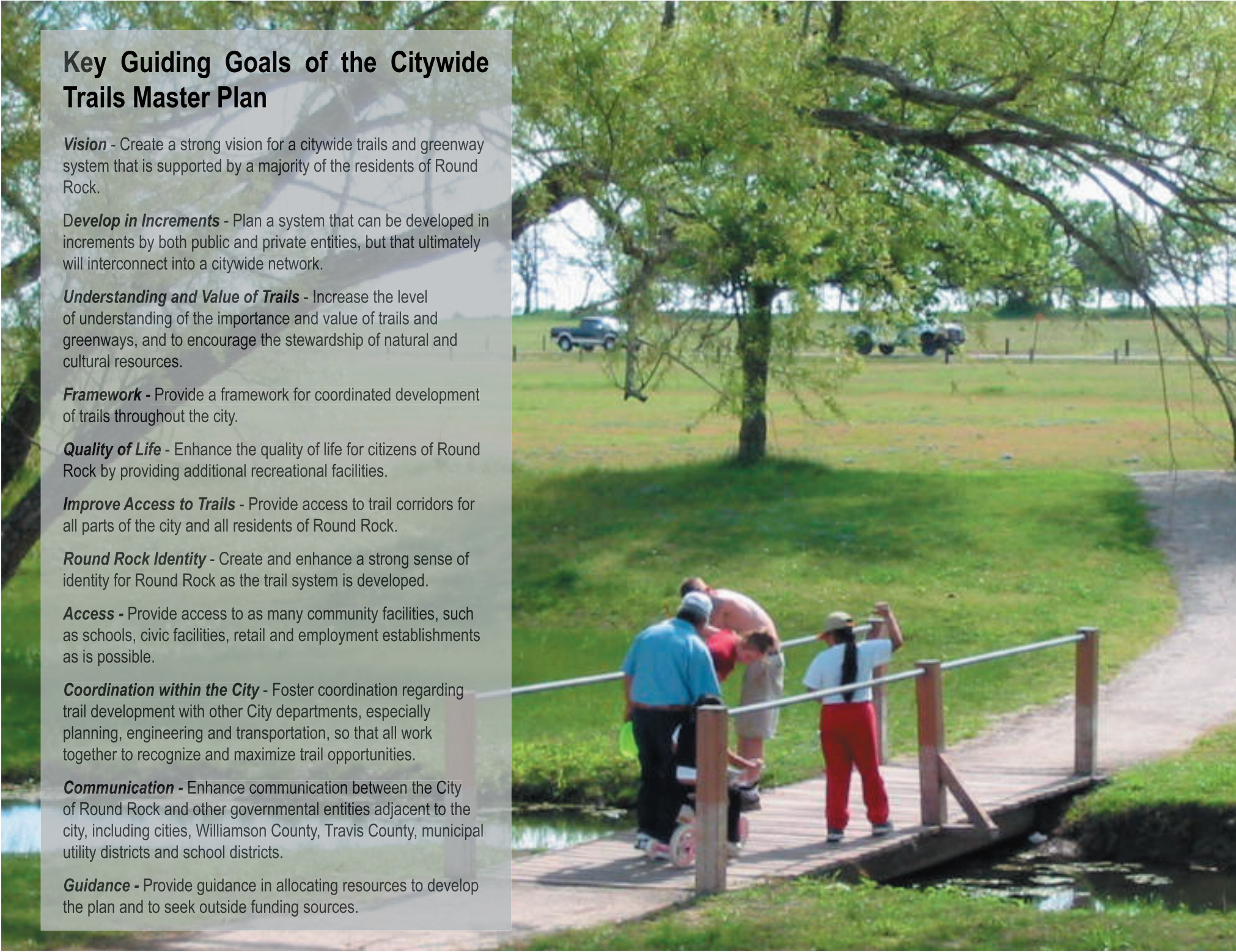
Round Rock Identity - Create and enhance a strong sense of identity for Round Rock as the trail system is developed.

Access - Provide access to as many community facilities, such as schools, civic facilities, retail and employment establishments as is possible.

Coordination within the City - Foster coordination regarding trail development with other City departments, especially planning, engineering and transportation, so that all work together to recognize and maximize trail opportunities.

Communication - Enhance communication between the City of Round Rock and other governmental entities adjacent to the city, including cities, Williamson County, Travis County, municipal utility districts and school districts.

Guidance - Provide guidance in allocating resources to develop the plan and to seek outside funding sources.



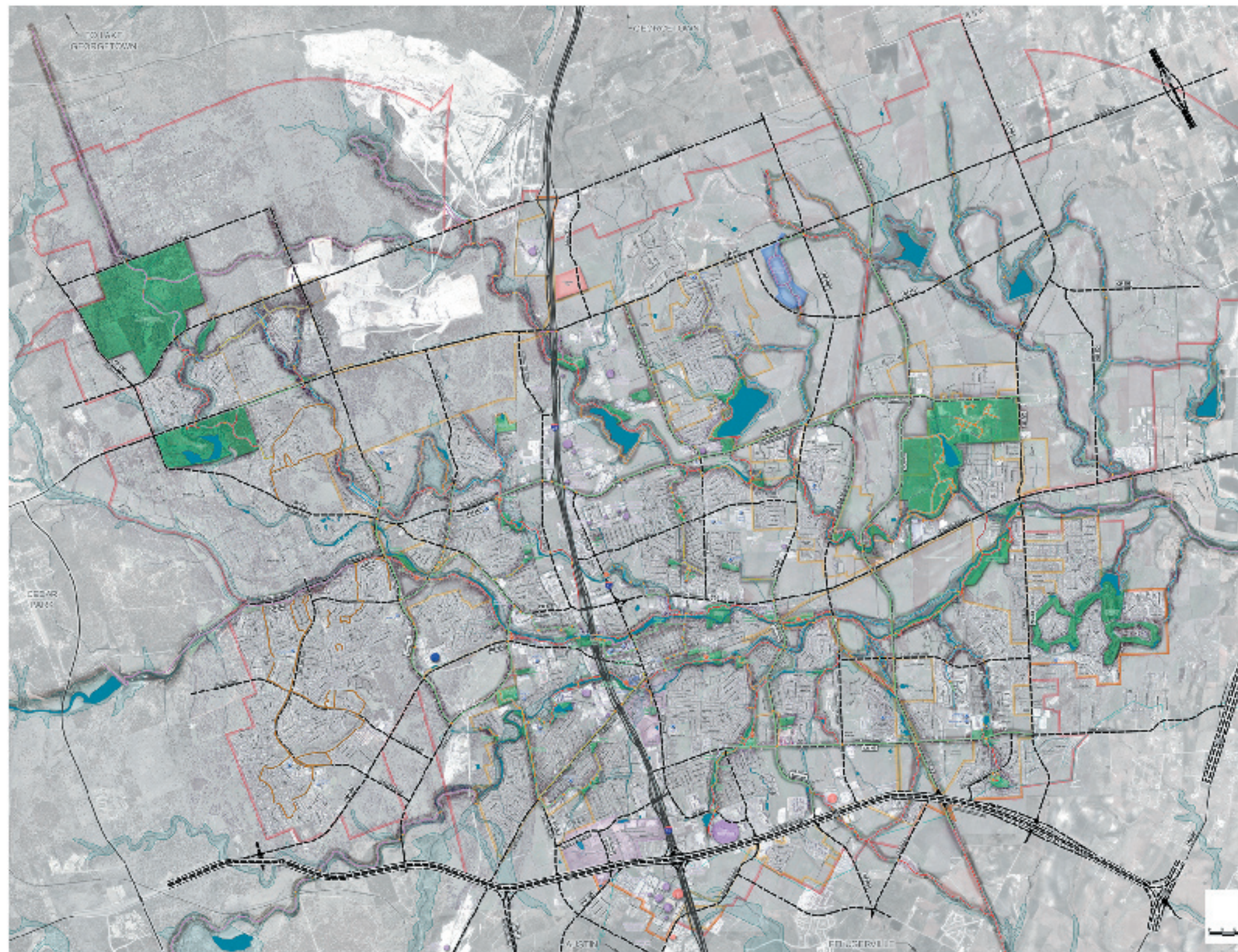
Major Attractors and Potential Destinations

Key potential trail destinations throughout the city have been identified as part of the trail planning process. Trail connections to these destinations can promote increased usage of the corridors, and demonstrates a greater need for the trail corridor, especially when applying for competitive grant funding.

Destinations that were noted throughout the city include:

- Schools
- Existing parks and recreation destinations such as the Clay Madsen Center
- Key city facilities
- Major employers as identified by the Round Rock Chamber of Commerce
- Multi-family housing developments (high density housing)
- Major retail areas (both existing and future as identified by the city's land use plan)

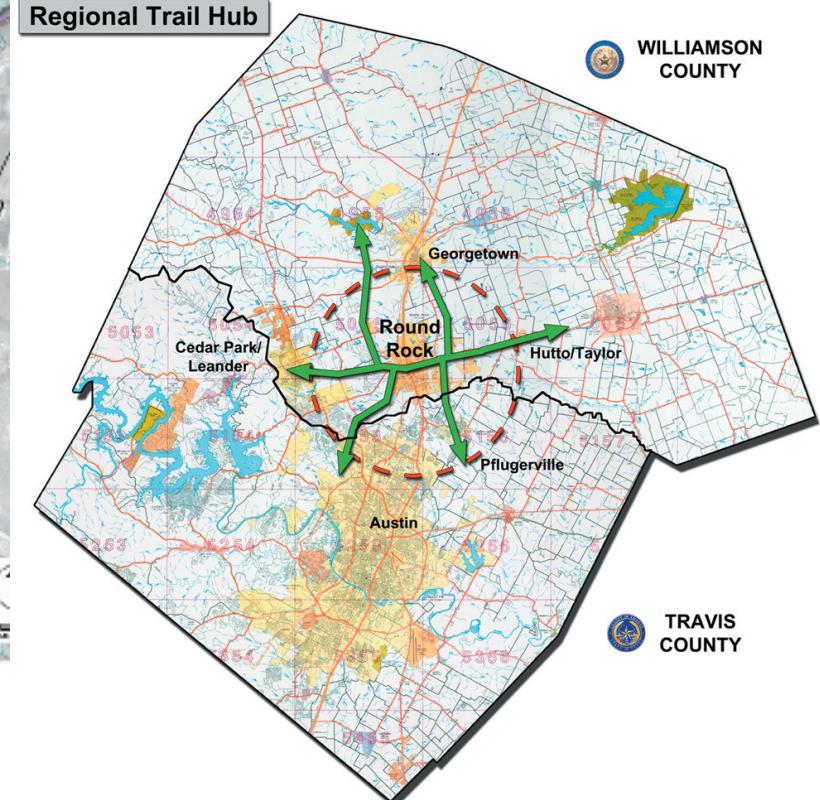
The aerial view of the city on this page identifies key destinations.



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CITYWIDE TRAILS MASTER PLAN ROUND ROCK, TEXAS

Regional Trail Hub



Existing Trails in Round Rock Today

Round Rock has a total of 6.28 miles of trails spread throughout the city today. Many of the existing trails occur within parks as internal walking loops with no external destination or connections.

A segment of the Brushy Creek Regional Trail is scheduled to be added in 2004, and will bring the total amount of trails in the city to just over 9 total miles.

The Municipal Utility Districts on the western side of Round Rock have completed approximately 4.6 miles of recreational trails, and these have proved to be popular amenities for residents of the area.

Most of the existing trails consist of asphalt surfacing. Asphalt has been the preferred trail surface in the city for the past 10 years, and local runners have expressed a preference for asphalt as their surface of choice. However, expansive soil conditions east of Interstate 35 have contributed to the early deterioration of several trail segments, and a move to concrete surfacing for long term durability is strongly encouraged.



Round Rock Trails Master Plan Existing Trails in Round Rock - 2004				
Category	Name	Sector	Type	Length (miles)
Internal Park Trails	Frontier Park	SW	Asphalt	0.19
	Greenlawn Place Park	SE		0.13
	Jester Farms Park	NE		0.48
	Kensington Park	SE	Asphalt	0.18
	Windy Terrace Park	SE		0.14
	Mesa Village Park	NE	Asphalt	0.32
	Somerset Park	NW	Asphalt	0.16
	Subtotal			1.60 miles
Linear Park Trails	Round Rock West Greenbelt	SW	Asphalt	0.87
	Behrens Ranch Trail			0.75
	Subtotal			1.62 miles
Major Trails within Parks	Memorial Park Trail	NW, NE, SE	Concrete	0.53
	Creekmont West Park	SW	Concrete	0.49
	Old Settlers Park Trail	NE	Asphalt	2.50
	Meadow Lake Park	NE	Concrete	0.29
	Subtotal			3.81 miles
Total Existing Trails in Round Rock				6.61 miles
Future Planned Trails	Brushy Creek East Regional Trail (programmed, 2004)	Regional	Asphalt	2.50 miles +/-
Total Trails in Round Rock with planned Brushy Creek East Trail				9.11 miles
Other Existing Non-City Trails	Williamson County Brushy Creek Trail	NW	Crushed granite/conc.	2.60
	Brushy Creek North MUD Trails	NW	Asphalt	1.00
	Brushy Creek South MUD Trails	SW	Asphalt	3.60
	Fern Bluff MUD Trails	NW	Asphalt	
Subtotal Non-Round Rock Trails				7.2 miles



Citizen Opinions Regarding Trails in Round Rock

Over an eight day period in March of 2003, Raymond Turco & Associates conducted a scientific telephone survey in conjunction with development of the city's master trail plan. This public opinion poll captured attitudes on trails and trail-related issues from respondents randomly selected from phone-matched households. The full sample of 400 respondents was interviewed with a comprehensive questionnaire that collected attitudinal data on trails utilization, including those located at Old Settler's Park, quality ratings of current trails, support for future improvements, including financial support in terms of a bond election to finance a citywide trail network. The resulting tabulations were analyzed to assist city staff, and elected and appointed officials in understanding public sentiment concerning these subjects. The highlights from the analysis of the survey are discussed below.

Assessing Current Trails In Round Rock

Frequency of Use of Existing Trails Today - Slightly more than one-third of citizens sampled (35%) acknowledged using a hike and bike trail in Round Rock in the past 12 months. In addition, 29% utilized a trail in Williamson County and 29% elsewhere in Texas. However, the majority of those sampled (52%) admitted that they had not used a hike and bike trail in any setting over the last 12 months.

Frequency of Use of Trails by Sector of the City - Residents from the western portion of the city were more frequent users of Round Rock trails -- 53% in the northwest and 46% in the southwest. That compared to percentages of 29% in the southeast and 23% in the northeast. The combined utilization rates of the two subsectors brought about the finding that people in the west sector were nearly twice as likely as those from the east (53%-27%) to utilize a Round Rock trail.

Citizens most likely not to use a Trail Today - The parental subsets most likely to not utilize a trail were non-parents (57% of people defined as having no children, or no children under the age of 18) and parents of pre-teens (55% of parents of children age 6-12). By age, over 55 year old respondents were most likely to have not experienced a trail recently (70%).

Citizens Most Likely to Use Trails Today - Parents of young children were the subset most likely to have utilized Round Rock trails (43%-36%-35%, and 30% of non-parents).

However, people younger than age 55 were still almost 50% likely to have not utilized a trail (49% of under 35 and 36-55 year olds) either. Round Rock trails were more often utilized by middle-aged respondents (33%-38%-26%), as too trails in Williamson County (21%-28%-12%).

Positive Aspects of Existing Trails in Round Rock Today - How well trails are maintained (55%-13%, 4.2:1), the overall safety of city hike and bike trails (54%-16%, 3.3:1), and the overall quality of city hike and bike trails (51%-18%, 2.8:1) were the aspects assessed most positively by Round Rock residents when asked to assign a quality rating to several trail attributes.

Least Positive Aspects of Existing Trails Today - Survey participants were least positive about the variety of amenities along trails (27%-30%, 0.9:1), having hike and bike trails conveniently located for people in all areas (38%-40%, 0.9:1) and the number of hike and bike trails (37%-36%, 1.0:1).

There was very little enthusiasm with the presented items -- excellent ratings were no higher than 13%, for overall safety of hike and bike trails and maintenance of trails. In addition, respondents were more emphatic in their negative impression of the number of hike and bike trails (6%-14%), having hike and bike trails conveniently located (6%-18%), and variety of amenities along trails (2%-10%).

Positive Aspects of Trails by Sector of the City - Residents in the southwest were more positive in assessing trail attributes than their counterparts in the other parts of the city. In total, six of seven items attained majority satisfaction ratings there, compared to four of seven in the northwest, and zero of seven in both eastern sectors of the city.

Diversity of Opinion Citywide - Several statements exhibited a diverse opinion citywide, including the variance for safety of hike and bike trails, which was 26% (72% in southwest, to 46% in northeast), for the variety of amenities along trails, which was 16% (37% in southwest, to 21% in northeast), and for the amount of nature areas, which was 17% (53% in southwest, to 36% in southeast).

Highest Dissatisfaction Ratings - Residents in all areas gave the highest dissatisfaction ratings to not having hike and bike trails conveniently located for people in all areas (44% in the northwest and southwest, to 39% in the northeast). In general, as children aged, parents became less satisfied and more dissatisfied with trails in Round Rock.

Declines in Satisfaction were evident regarding the number of hike and bike trails (42%-34%-34%), having hike and bike trails conveniently located (38%-31%-33%), overall quality of trails (57%-54%-45%), overall safety,

Round Rock Citizen Opinions and Comments

(58%-56%-52%), and how well trails are maintained (59%-54%-43%).

Negative Aspects of the Current Location of Trails - Note that the location of hike and bike trails was particularly upsetting to parents, as negative ratings outpaced positive findings among parents of young children (38%-40%), pre-teens (31%-46%), and teenagers (33%-51%). Non-parents were most satisfied with how well trails are maintained (55%) and the overall quality and safety of hike and bike trails (both 49%).

Feelings Regarding Trails in Old Settlers Park - One in five (20%) said they had utilized the new trails at Old Settlers Park in the past year. Eighty percent were either unfamiliar with the trails (32%) or admitted they had not made use of the trails (48%). Among the subset (N=77) who had utilized a trail, the overall quality of trails (90%-7%, 12.0:1), width of trails (88%-8%, 11.0:1), and the trails' scenic quality (90%-9%, 10.0:1) were far and away the aspects that respondents were most positive toward. Positive marks were also five times greater regarding the overall level of safety when on the trails (82%-16%, 5.1:1) and the type of paving used on the trails (79%-17%, 4.6:1). The aspect that residents were least positive about was the amount of shade along the trail (61%-36%, 1.6:1).

Trail utilization did not display any regional preference, as similar percentages of residents used the trail (22% in northwest and southeast, to 18% in northeast). Lack of familiarity with the trail system was higher in the southwest (39%) than anyplace else, compared to a low percentage of 30% in the northwest and southeast. Parents (24%-28%-23%), more so than non-parents (15%) acknowledged having used the Old Settlers Park trails. Newer city residents formed the subset least likely to have utilized the trails (13%-25%-23%), as too, respondents over the age of 55 (16%-27%-9%).

Positive Aspects of Old Settlers Park Trail - However, at least 85% of trail utilizers in all four areas gave excellent/good ratings to three of the six aspects: the trails' scenic quality (100%-89%-85%-89%), the width of the trails (85%-94%-85%-89%), and the overall quality of the trails (100%-88%-85%-89%). The widest variance in quality ratings was expressed by respondents regarding the type of paving used on the trails (88% in the northeast, to 62% in the southwest). Non-parents were more complimentary than parents regarding the overall quality of the trails (96%, to 88%-94%-79%), the trails' scenic quality (92%, to 87%-90%-85%), the width of the trails (92%, to 79%-88%-90%), and the overall level of safety when on the trails (86%, to 67%-80-69%).

A Community of Trails - The Citywide Trails Master Plan for Round Rock

Assessing Future Trails In Round Rock

Most Important Aspect of Future Trails - Safety was mentioned three times more than any other attribute (29%) as most important for trails to include. Other popular suggestions were trail amenities and scenery/views (both 9%), and nature areas/walking paths (8%). Having trails lighted and with easy access for resident/business (both 7%), with smooth/good surface/paved asphalt, and wide width (both 6%) were of similar importance to residents, although ranked lower.

Ranking of Most Important Aspects of Trails by Sector - Safety was a more important concern to people in the northwest (36%) and southwest (31%) subsectors than in the southeast (29%) or northeast (23%). Citywide variances were noted regarding safety (36% in the northwest, to 23% in the northeast), trail amenities (20% in the southwest, to 7% in the northwest and northeast), and lighted (13% in the northeast, to 3% in northwest and southwest).

Residents in the west concentrated more on trail safety (36%-27%) and smooth/good surface/paved (10%-5%) as important trail characteristics, while scenery/views (11%-7%), lighted (9%-3%) and width/wide (7%-2%) were more popular among east sector survey participants.

Ranking of Most Important Aspects of Trails by Gender and Age - Women focused on safety (31%-27%) and lighted trails (11%-3%) and men, on scenery/views (11%-7%). Senior survey participants were more demanding of nature areas/walking paths (77%-6%-18%) and smooth/good surface/paved/asphalt (2%-5%-15%), but not as concerned with scenery/views (12%-9%-5%), lighted (8%-8%-2%), or easy access to residents/businesses (7%-9%-2%).

Preferred Reasons or Activities to Use Trails - To explore other parts of the city through trails (75%-25%, 0.2:1) or to visit friends in other neighborhoods (65%-34%, 1.9:1) were the activities respondents acknowledged being most likely to utilize if a bicycle or walking route was available near their home. Conversely, residents were least likely to use a bicycle or walking route to travel to work (20%-77%, 0.2:1).

Slightly less than half of those surveyed said they would use bicycle or walking routes to travel to a nearby retail store, grocery store or restaurant (46%-53%, 0.8:1) or to connect to park and ride facilities (45%-53%, 0.8:1). Enthusiasm for using bicycle or walking routes for various purposes was not overwhelming, as very likely responses did not exceed 19% (exploring other parts of the city through trails) and were as low as 8% (traveling to work).

Respondents in all areas of the city were more likely to use bicycle or walking routes for exploring other parts of the city through trails; however, there was a 19% variance from the residents in the northwest (84%) to those in the southwest (65%).

In fact, residents of the northwest were more likely than residents in other areas to use trails for any purpose. Over seventy percent of parental subsets were likely use the bicycle or walking routes for exploring other parts of the city through trails (82%-80%-76%) and to go visit friends in other neighborhoods (76%-76%-73%). These two activities were also most popular among non-parents (70% and 54%).



Importance of Potential Improvements - Of the potential improvements to current and future trails, parking at major trail entrances (96%-3%, 32.0:1) and benches or rest stations (95%-4%, 23.0:1) were the most supported, and overwhelming so, by city residents. All ten potential improvements were supported by a minimum 71% (fitness stations along trails) of all respondents polled.

Other popularly supported improvements were lights along major trails (91%-8%, 11.0:1), heightened scenic areas (87%-8%, 10.0:1), directional signage (92%-6%, 8.8:1), and nature viewing areas (88%-10%, 8.8:1). Respondents were least supportive of fitness stations along trails (71%-22%, 3.2:1) and bike racks at trail entrances (80%-15%, 5.3:1).

Residents were most enthusiastic (strong support) about the following improvements: lights along some major trails (40%) and benches or rest stations and parking at major trail entrances (both 31%). At least 9 out of 10 residents in all four areas supported parking at major trail entrances (99%-95%-93%-95%) and benches or rest stations (97%-95%-94%-93%).

Other specific improvements which garnered at least 90% support in a particular subset were lights along some major trails everywhere but the southwest (90%-96%-89%-90%), as well as directional signage (96%-91%-89%-91%) and nature viewing areas in the north (92%-90%-86%-86%), and heightened scenic areas in the northwest (93%-78%-82%-87%).

Most Important Improvements to Parents - Ninety percent of all parents were supportive of the following trail-related improvements: benches or rest stations (97%-96%-96%), directional signage (94%-94%-96%), nature viewing areas (91%-92%-90%), and parking at major trail entrances (98%-95%-94%).

Most Important Improvements to Non- Parents - Only two items were supported by 90% of non-parents and those were parking at major trail entrances (94%) and benches or rest stations (93%). While non-parents were less supportive of trail improvements than parents, only mile markers (78%, to 89% of parents of teenagers) displayed more than a 10-point variance between the subsets.

Support for a Citywide Trail Network - By a ratio of nearly ten to one (89%-9%, 9.9:1) citizens indicated they would support a city-wide trail network throughout all of Round Rock. Strong support totaled 39%, in contrast to minimal strong opposition (2%). And just one percent of the sample chose the no opinion response, indicating a desire to comment on this issue.

Support for a Citywide Trail Network by Sector of the City - Support was no lower than the 88% in the southwest subsector and as high as 92% in the northeast. Strong support was higher in the northern regions (both 43%) than in the south (31% and 39%), and especially in the southwest, where just 31% strongly supported the trail network. The ratio of support to opposition was 9.9:1 (89%-9%), in the northwest, 15.3:1 (92%-6%) in the northeast, 7.3:1 (88%-12%) in the southwest, and 8.1:1 (89%-11%) in the southeast.

Support among Parents - Parents of younger children were more strongly supportive than anyone else (50%-39%-34%) as well as non-parents (37%). They were also more supportive in general (94%-93%-89%, and 86%), although the variance was not as significant.

Support for Trails Adjacent to Their Homes - Respondents were more than three times as likely to support (75%) as to oppose (23%) a hike and bike trail adjacent to their home. In addition, intense opposition was one-half the amount of strong support (9%-18%) and only 2% had no opinion on this question.

Strong support for hike and bike trails adjacent to homes showed minimal variance, from 20% in the southeast to 16% in the northwest. The variance with regards to overall support was much greater, from 82% in the northwest to 68% in the southwest. There was also a sector variance of seven points (82%-75%), with people in the west more supportive of the trail positioning. The ratio of support to opposition in the four regions was 5.5:1 (82%-14%) in the northwest, 4.3:1 (81%-19%) in the northeast, 2.2:1 (68%-31%) in the southwest, and 2.8:1 (71%-26%) in the southeast. Opposition in the two southern sectors was significantly higher (31% and 26%, to 14% and 19%).

Parents were more supportive of the proposed trail location (77%-80%-79%) than non-parents (71%), although the full variance among the subsets was less than 10%. Opposition was more prevalent among non-parents (27%) than parents (20%-19%-21%). People who were newer to the community (79%-75%-70%) and younger (80%-77%-62%) were the driving forces behind support for the trail locations.

Seventy-one percent of residents sampled said they would either support (58%) or strongly support (13%) a bond election to finance the construction of a trail system in Round Rock. Comparatively, 17% would oppose and 8% strongly oppose the potential election, with only 4% having no opinion on the issue.

The ratio of support to opposition was greater (2.8:1) than the ratio of strong support to strong opposition (1.6:1), indicating a higher degree of soft support. The median support score (71%) was exceeded in the northwest (76%) and northeast and southeast (both 72%) quadrants, but not in the southwest (64%). Opposition was higher in the southwest (29%, to 21% in the northwest), as too, no opinion responses (7%, to 3% in northwest and southeast). Therefore, the ratio was lowest in the southwest (64%-29%, 2.2:1), compared to 3.6:1 (76%-21%) in the northwest, 3.0:1 (72%-24%) in the northeast, and 2.9:1 (72%-25%) in the southeast.

People who utilized trails were more supportive of the potential bond election than non-users. Parents (73%-74%-72%) were more likely to support the election than non-parents (69%), although the variance in percentages was not significant. It should be noted that parents of teenagers were more strongly opposed to the election than strongly supportive (14%-13%). In a trend established in previous questions, newer residents (79%-72%-63%) and younger respondents (79%-73%-55%) were the subsets most supportive of the potential bond election.

Agreement with Trail Related Statements - “A city-wide trail network in Round Rock will improve the quality of life in our city” (84%-16%, 5.2:1) was the trail-related statement that garnered the highest ratio of agreement to disagreement, indicating a positive belief in that statement.

More than 70% of respondents in each area voiced agreement that a city-wide trail network in Round Rock will improve the quality of life in the city.

Support for a citywide trail network was no lower than the 88% in the southwest subsector and as high as 92% in the northeast.

By a ratio of nearly ten to one (89%-9%, 9.9:1) citizens indicated they would support a city-wide trail network throughout all of Round Rock.

Residents said they would support spending additional city tax dollars to expand trails in the city (74%-77%-59%-74%), and they want Round Rock to have one of the best trail systems in the entire state (77%-77%-51%-65%).

Seventy-one percent of residents sampled said they would either support (58%) or strongly support (13%) a bond election to finance the construction of a trail system in Round Rock.

“A city-wide trail network in Connections to Schools - Residents were also three times more likely to agree than disagree that “I would like trails in Round Rock to connect to nearby schools” (75%-21%, 3.5:1), “I would like to see some trails in Round Rock primitive or non-paved” (75%-21%, 3.5:1), and “I would support spending additional city tax dollars to expand trails in the city” (72%-24%, 3.0:1).

Support for Using Bicycles to Get to Work - Respondents were most likely to dispute two statements: “I would use my bike to get to work if trails were more accessible to my employment area” (26%-66%, 0.3:1), and “I would move to a different neighborhood in Round Rock if it had better trails for recreation and going to work” (19%-79%, 0.2:1).

Use of Roadways for Bike Lanes - The remaining two statements generated an agreement ratio of 2.5:1 each: “I would support widening some roadways to allow for bicycle lanes” and “I want Round Rock to have one of the best trail systems in the entire state.”

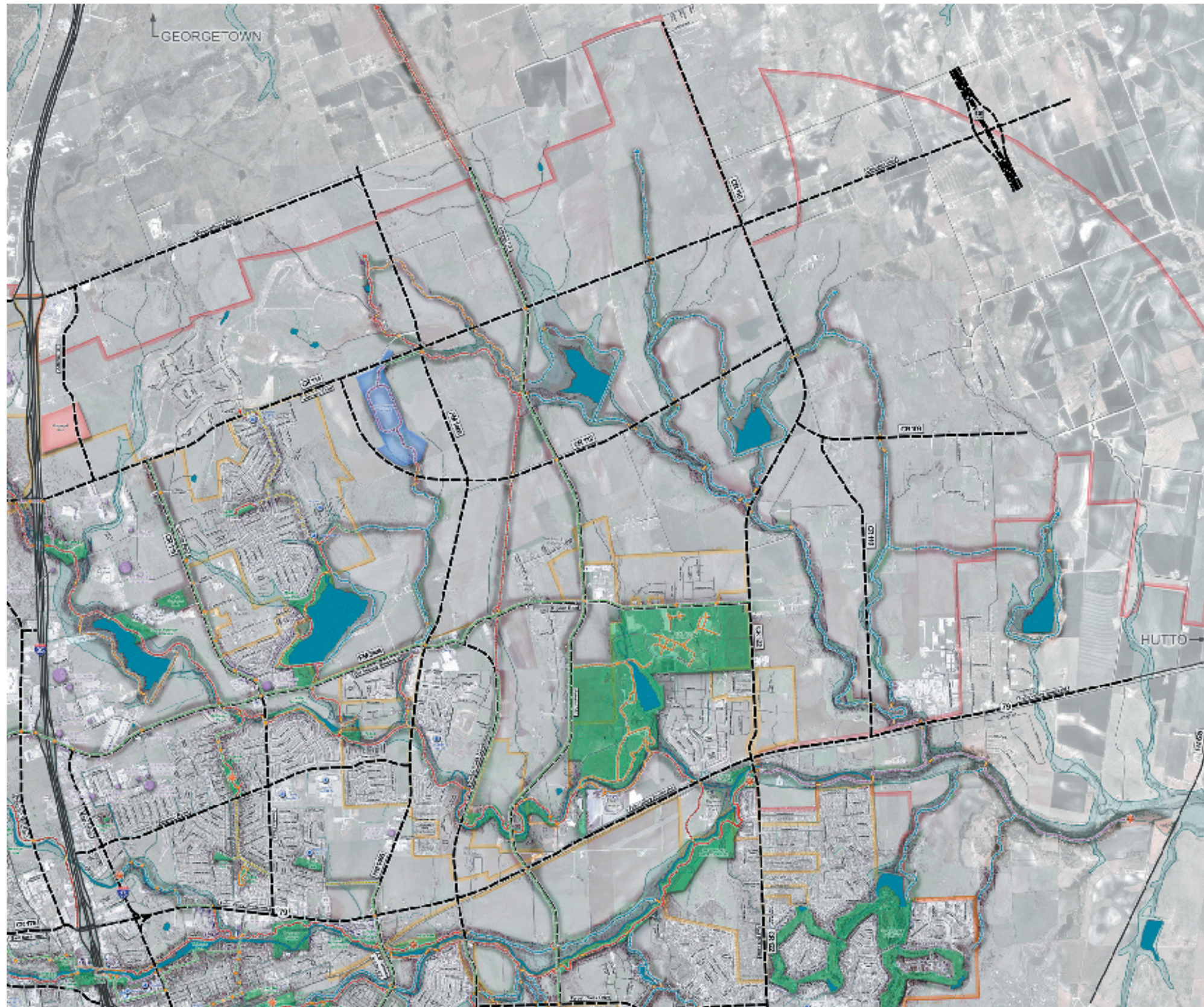
Intensity of Agreement with Statements - Of the eight statements, survey participants most intensely agreed that a city-wide trail network in Round Rock will improve the quality of life in our city (26%), that they would support widening some roadways to allow for bicycle lanes (20%), and **that they want Round Rock to have one of the best trail systems in the entire state (19%).**

More than 70% of respondents in each area voiced agreement that a city-wide trail network in Round Rock will improve the quality of life in the city (85%-87%-77%-84%) and that they would like to see some trails in Round Rock primitive or non-paved (84%-71%-71%-76%). And in at least two sub-sectors, 70% agreed that they would like trails in Round Rock to connect to nearby schools (68%-75%-81%-74%), that they would support widening some roadways to allow for bicycle lanes (71%-66%-67%-74%), they would support spending additional city tax dollars to expand trails in the city (74%-77%-59%-74%), and they want Round Rock to have one of the best trail systems in the entire state (77%-77%-51%-65%).

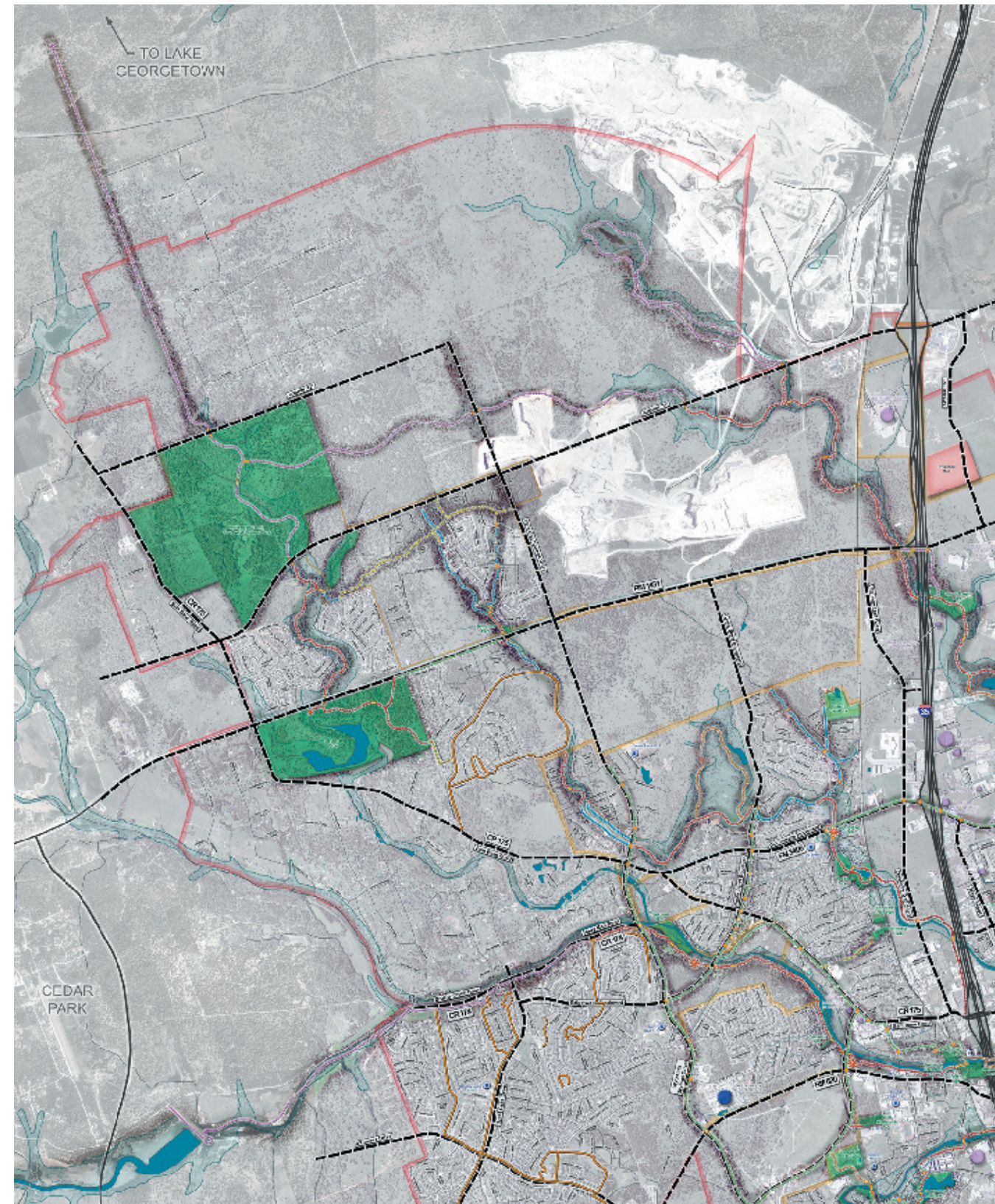
Support for Improving Quality of Life and Use of Tax Dollars for Trails - Seventy percent-plus of parents agreed that a citywide trail network will improve the quality of life in the city (87%-87%-85%), that they would like to see trails connected to nearby schools (81%-82%-80%), they would support widening some roadways (81%-77%-73%), and they would support spending additional city tax dollars to expand trails (78%-74%-72%).

Planning By Sectors of the City

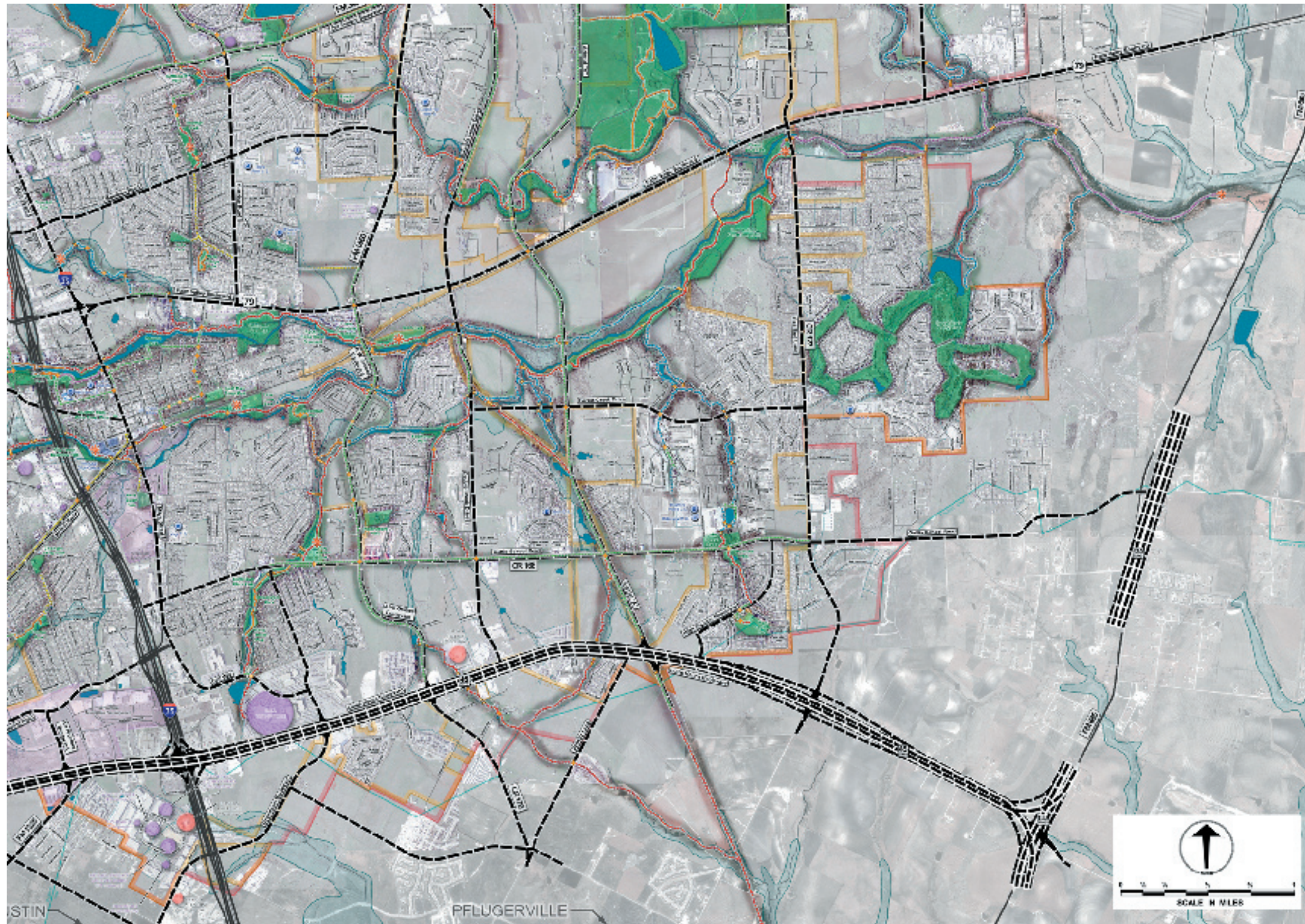
More detailed assessments of trail opportunities throughout Round Rock were made on a quadrant by quadrant basis. These quadrants are shown on the following pages.



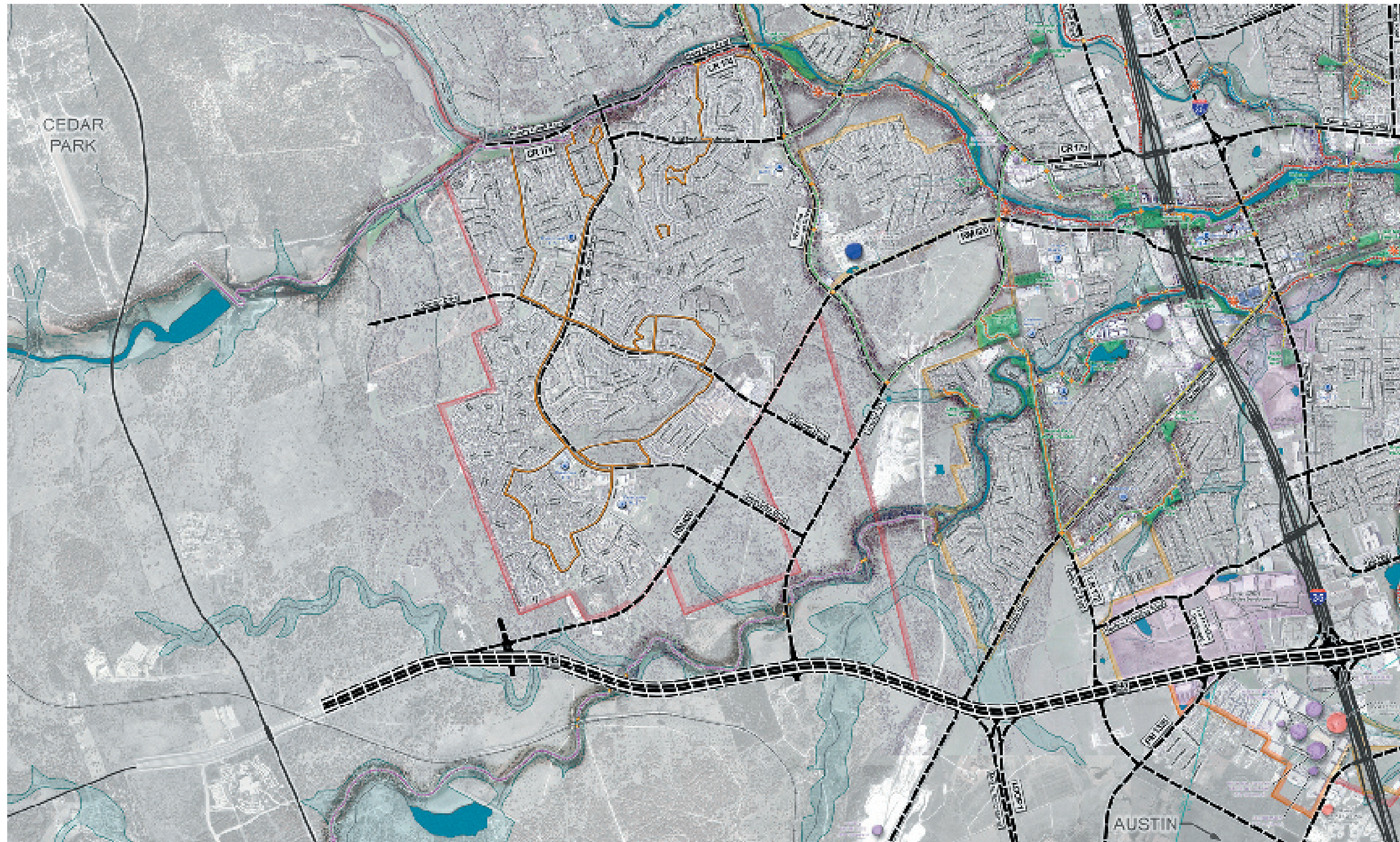
Northeast Sector



Northwest Sector



Southeast Sector



Southwest Sector